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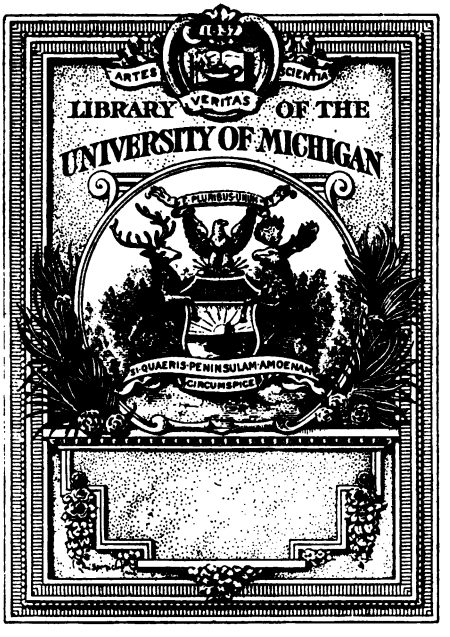

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THE CATHEDRAL.

AN ADDRESS

BY THE

RT. REV. WILLIAM LAWRENCE, D. D.,

TO THE

CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

MAY 4, 1904.

BOSTON:
THE DIOCESAN HOUSE,
No. 1 JOY STREET.
1904.

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THE CATHEDRAL.

ON Sunday, February 14, 1904, Mary Sophia Walker dying bequeathed the residue of her property, after the payment of certain gifts, in trust, "for the purpose of building, establishing, and maintaining a Cathedral or Bishop's Church of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the City of Boston." She wisely gave the Diocese ten years in which to consider the acceptance of this gift of about seven hundred thousand dollars besides her estate at Waltham.

The reception by the community and the members of the Church of an idea which, a generation ago, would have been almost inconceivable, has been interesting and suggestive. There immediately arose before the imagination of thousands of citizens in this home of the Puritans a glorious

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fane with its towers and buttresses, its lofty arches, uplifting music, and reverent worship. There swept through the memory of many a son of New England the overwhelming emotion with which he first entered some great church of the old world, Chester, Westminster, Chartres, or Milan. The choristers' voices seemed still to resound in the recesses of his memory.

On the other hand, there were probably a number of people who had some such questions and doubts as these: — Is it wise to bring into our modern life with its intelligence and forward look such mediaeval expressions of religious faith, associated as they are with ignorance and superstition? Is not this another step away from the traditions of the individuality of religious faith so dear to our New England hearts, and towards a spiritual autocracy, institutionalism, and the power of episcopacy? Some of the cathedrals of Europe stand like silent tombs in the midst of ignorant and squalid people. Is it wise to lock up a vast amount of capital in a great church, even granted its beneficent influence, when the sum might be invested in hospitals or libraries, or for the employment of labor?

Moreover some Churchmen naturally wonder if the overshadowing towers may not depress the parish churches, and the centralizing influence of

the cathedral weaken the fine sense of parochial integrity. How, too, can the Bishop fulfill his duties to the whole Diocese and at the same time take the added burden of the administration of a church?

Reasonable doubts and questions are these, all worthy of consideration. The question that we want first to answer is whether most of these doubts have been due to the cathedral system itself or to certain traditions and conditions of the past which have prevented the cathedral idea from attaining its natural expression and result.

I have thought it wise, therefore, to bring before you, the official representatives of this Diocese, and through you to all the people, not only of the Church but of our great community, some suggestions as to the essential idea of the cathedral; to show how in the history of cathedrals, especially in England, the Church has suffered through her departure from the idea; and to suggest the opportunity for its fuller realization by the Church in this country.

The cathedral is not simply a great church, not only a Bishop's church. It is the visible expression of the organic life and sentiment of the Church of the whole Diocese. To understand the cathedral idea we must therefore first understand the

organization of the Church. We are not Congregationalists; we are not a group of independent self-governing parishes. The parish is not the Church unit. Nor on the other hand are we a religious aristocracy. We are an organic body; the people, the clergy, and the Bishop, who is the chief pastor. And we are bound together by spiritual ties, knit into one administration by constitutional bonds, traditions, and limitations, so that each order and individual is dependent on the others, and each does its best work through co-operation with the others. The unit of the Church is the Diocese, — the Bishop, clergy, and laity. The cathedral is simply the expression in architectural form, of the Diocese, its constituents and spiritual purpose. The cathedral may be as noble as that of Durham or as humble as the chapel of a Missionary Bishop; its essential features are that it be the official seat of the Bishop and his spiritual home; that through its officers or chapter of clergy and laity it represent the whole Diocese; that it be recognized as the centre of diocesan worship, work, teaching, and preaching, as the church belonging not to the Bishop but to the whole Diocese; and that all the people, coming from the various parishes for counsel and mutual inspiration, feel that here also is their spiritual home.

This the cathedral was in the early days of the Church, for each Diocese was then little more than a city and the Bishop was the chief pastor of the people. Later the monastic system arose. As we study the history of England's religious life, we note how the power of these orders and the absence of the Bishop on secular and spiritual duties led to the control of the cathedrals by the monks. The Bishop was gradually pushed out and lost all rights and power in his church. At other points the monasteries erected great abbeys, which were not cathedrals in any sense, but noble houses of worship, wherein two or three times a year great bodies of pilgrims to the shrine worshiped, but which for the most part stood silent and empty. Nevertheless, such abbeys fulfilled their office of being the gifts of the monks and the people of their richest and best to the glory of God. Since the Reformation some of these great abbeys have received the chair of the Bishop and become the centre of the Diocese, and thus have been made cathedrals.

Through all this and in the later history of the Church we notice the interesting inconsistencies so common in English institutions. We note, for instance, a great abbey church like Westminster, which except for a short period never was a cathedral, but which had almost complete inde-

pendence of episcopal control; we find cathedrals in which the Bishop had no rights and which he could not even enter without permission of the Dean. The Archbishop of Canterbury to-day lives not in the close of Canterbury but in London, and it is only within a few years that he has made his official residence for a few weeks in the cathedral town. The palace of the Bishop of Winchester is not in Winchester but many miles away at Farnham Castle, the ancient seat of the Prince Bishop.

In spite of many and great reforms in the cathedrals of England, there is not one that consistently fulfills the cathedral idea; for, apart from other reasons, the laity in the Church of England have not their true representative place. They cannot have it under the present national ecclesiastical system. Hence the cathedral cannot fully represent the organic life of the whole Diocese, laity, clergy, and Bishop.

When, therefore, we base our questions as to the efficiency of the cathedral upon English conditions, we must appreciate the fact that in England the idea has never been consistently expressed. Interesting as have been and still are its historic monuments, uplifting in architecture, inspiring in conception and sometimes in worship, the English cathedrals have until lately been too often the retreat of lazy ecclesiastics, the scene of depressing

and mechanical service, empty tombs of the past, from which has gone forth little help or inspiration to the people. I say "too often," but every student of English history knows that from the cathedrals have also come some of the great works of English literature; that they have sent forth from their schools thousands of Christian youth; and that among their officers have been many, many strong men of devotion and saintliness. It has been one great problem and achievement of the Church of England in the past generation to revitalize these great churches, to reform their organization, to open their choirs and naves to the whole people. A vast amount of energy, money, and spiritual force has, however, been used up in overcoming old traditions, breaking down abuses, repairing fabrics, and bringing the whole Church to an appreciation of the possibilities of a living, working, worshiping Diocese, expressed in the cathedral.

We turn now to our own land and Church. Here again the short history of cathedrals has not been inspiring, and here again we find the usual cause of failure, where failure has been, in the fact that the cathedral idea has not been consistently expressed. Some Missionary Bishops, rightly feeling that upon the episcopate lay the responsibility for leadership, have founded their

cathedrals as the centre of missionary work. With the development of the work, however, they may not always have brought the parishes and various institutions into close enough relation to the centre. The distances have been such as to make representation impossible, and the cathedral church has become a localized parish; or the financial support of the central church or of the Bishop has compelled him to make terms with some parish whereby the integrity of the parish church was kept, while the Bishop simply had his seat. Thereby has arisen a double organization as destructive of efficiency as if the administration of the State House should be carried on by a Committee of Ways and Means independent of the officers of the Commonwealth,—a condition practically impossible for work, and provocative of misunderstanding.

Until this Diocese is ready and able to adopt the cathedral idea to the full, it is wise, it seems to me, for the Diocese to make no organized step towards it.

On the other hand, the fact is that in the Episcopal Church in this country is offered the best opportunity since the days of the Apostles for carrying out to the full the true idea of the cathedral, and that especially because of the wisdom of the founders of our Church in so organizing the

Church in harmony with our national institutions that the cathedral system is the most American of all for spiritual administration. What do I mean by this? The State House stands as the visible expression of our democratic Commonwealth. There are the seats of the permanent officers of the State. To it come the representatives of the communities and the larger sections of the State, and in it centre the thoughts, movements, and ideals of the people. From it radiate the varied influences and forces of the Commonwealth. Although under English governors there was abuse of authority, no one of us now hesitates to recognize the Governor as the commander-in-chief, or dreads political autocracy because the State House is a great and noble building. We have accepted a constitutional government; there are safeguards of law and tradition. There may be sometimes movements towards centralization or again towards decentralization, but we feel secure because there can be no movement without the deliberate will of the people expressed in legislation. No one of us would wish to see the Governor with no central seat of office, walking the streets, meeting men when and where he could. No one would say that, because the Governor was a man of personal influence, that was enough and he needed no visible and official home.

And yet there is still in many people of our community an undertone of suspicion of the episcopate. The Bishop to-day has no right to officiate in any church in the Diocese unless for a formal visitation, except at the invitation and by the courtesy of rectors and vestries, which, I am glad to say, can now always be taken for granted. He has no representative official home except on the street and in the railroad train, and an office in our one humble institutional centre, the Diocesan House. He has no recognized means of reaching the representatives of the various parishes and institutions of the Diocese, for in the Diocesan Convention no institutions are represented.

At the time of the creation of our national government, the laity of our Church and a good body of the clergy were in strong sympathy and close contact with the movement for national organization. A majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Churchmen. A Chaplain of the Continental Congress, Bishop White, was an intimate friend of those who led in the forming of our national Constitution.

The result was that the organization of our Church is remarkably similar to the organization of the nation. The laity have an essential part, they are practically equal in all matters of legislation to the clergy. In fact, the slightest altera-

tion of the law of our national Church cannot be made without the vote of the representative laity. Each diocesan Bishop is elected for life, and with no power over his own succession, by the clergy and laity. He is consecrated by God's Spirit in the laying on of the hands of his brethren. Our diocesan constitution moves along the lines of the constitutions of our States. There is the balancing of powers on the part of the several representative orders. The Bishop can no more transcend his constitutional authority than can the Governor.

In the development, therefore of a cathedral administration, we have simply a development after the analogy of our State tradition, — constitutional representative bodies which are mutually restrictive and mutually helpful. The parishes, missions, and institutions of a Diocese are its great spiritual constituency; on their integrity and strength the spiritual life of the Diocese depends, and no cathedral is true to its best ideal which in any way tends to weaken parochial or local responsibility and opportunity. This must be said, however, that under our present system, with its emphasis on the unity of the parish, each parish has been liable to consider itself too much, its work and its form of Churchmanship, and thus to become narrow and parochial. We know well

how the isolated country town gains by the consciousness that it is a part of the whole Commonwealth, and that it has its right and place in the State House. We have not yet in our Church administration consistently acted upon the idea of our democratic and constitutional Commonwealth.

Again, under our present system, the Bishop has not been brought into close enough relations with the organic life of the parishes through their representative clergy and laity. The truth is that the weakness of the Episcopate in our Church in this country has been in its isolation. Bishops have been left too much alone. They have not been made conscious enough of the temper of the clergy and laity as a body. If the Bishop be a weak man, he has, where he has had freedom to act, been liable to become autocratic in small things; if a strong man, it has been possible for him to gain too much power by keeping his clergy and laity in the background. A Bishop needs the safeguard, power, and inspiration gained by the sympathetic counsel of his brethren of the clergy and laity. He needs a cabinet or chapter of men close about him, clergy and laity, and also representatives of them all from the different parts of the Diocese.

When therefore a Diocese is by its temper and historic and geographical conditions ready for the

full development of the cathedral idea, and not before, then is the time for the whole body of the Diocese to consider whether that idea can be realized.

We now turn to the Church in Massachusetts. It was not until some thirty or forty years ago that the Diocese came to a realization of itself. There were a few strong parishes in the larger cities, some weak ones in the towns and villages; there was much parochialism. The Bishop, isolated, confirmed in parish after parish, but was not often considered as the leader of the Diocese or the Father in God of people and clergy. The Bishop himself had little conception of the organic life of a Diocese. A large part of the time of Bishop Eastburn was consumed in his duties as rector of Trinity Church. Under Bishop Paddock there was an active development of parish life. He emphasized the duty of the Church to cover the whole Commonwealth, and organized for the first time a Diocesan Board of Missions, thus recognizing a diocesan unit in the missionary work. He felt and felt rightly that the parishes make the spiritual power of the Diocese, as do the cities, towns, and villages the political and financial power of the State. His figure was a familiar one, moving up and down the railroads

and through the streets of the towns. Thus were created a large number of spiritual units, loosely connected, and a broad base of spiritual life.

Then came the fifteen months of Bishop Brooks's remarkable episcopate. His great spiritual personality centred the thoughts and affections not only of the whole Diocese but of the whole Commonwealth upon the Bishop of Massachusetts. He immediately felt the need of more diocesan institutional life as expressed in the Diocesan House, and of more diocesan *esprit de corps*. During his episcopate not a law was changed nor a constitutional condition altered, but the whole temper of the people of the Church and of the State was transformed in its relation to the episcopate. He was claimed as their Bishop by thousands of people not of the Church fold, and he gave to the citizens of this Puritan Commonwealth a noble conception of the spiritual power of the episcopate. At his death the Church had through the power of his life the realization of a spiritual solidarity hitherto undreamed of.

These then were the conditions when I became your Bishop: — strong and widespread parish life, the tradition of persistent annual confirmations by Bishop Paddock, sustained at the cost of his strength by Bishop Brooks, a diocesan consciousness existent but not heartily realized. My im-

mediate work, I felt, was to sustain the parish life in all its integrity, to encourage so far as was in my power the spiritual unity created by the personality of Bishop Brooks, to bring the Diocese into a fuller consciousness of itself, and then to move on to a stronger expression of the organic life of the Diocese and bind it together in fuller unity. Towards all this came the development of the Archdeaconry system, and the creation of a diocesan paper, which was to be and has been not the organ of the Bishop but an expression of the life of the Diocese, and in it my first word was that the Diocese and not the parish is the Church unit. The division of the Diocese, which was then imminent, suggested the opportunity of a more compact, organic life in Eastern Massachusetts.

When, therefore, some six years ago, the legal representative of Miss Walker formally asked me whether, if a client of his (whose name I did not then know) should leave her fortune for the erection and endowment of a cathedral, my answer was, if the amount were a small one, No; but if it were large enough to justify the expectations of the people in the beginning of such a cathedral as this Diocese should have, Yes; for I felt that within a few years — and the time has come earlier than I expected — the Diocese would be in such a

condition as would make the expression of the cathedral idea a natural development of its organic life.

Having reached this point, the question now arises for answer, What place has a cathedral of this Church in this City of Boston and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, this social and political centre of New England, with its noble traditions of Puritanism and individuality in religious life? I emphasize the phrase, "noble traditions," for I believe that to the spirit of independency and to the Congregational Churches all Christendom and especially the Church of England are in heavy debt. Our fathers stemmed the tide of centralization, expressed the rights and duties of the laity, emphasized parish integrity, and gathered the people of each town and village into one spiritual family. So long as the civic life of England and this country was made up of towns and villages, the independent Congregational and parish system had its great opportunity. The parish churches of the Church of England and the Congregational churches of New England testify to the vitality of the parish of a century or two ago. There was little contact between town and town, and therefore little scope for the work of a centralizing administration. The leadership of the episcopate and the consciousness of the

organic life of the whole Church were at a low point.

To-day, however, with the change of civic conditions, the easy connection between town and town, and the concentration of the people in our large cities, we are returning to the conditions of the early Church, where, with a Bishop as chief pastor of the city, there was a consciousness of organic life. It is a familiar fact that the Congregationalists are realizing the weakness of their form of administration, and there is a strong tendency among them towards federation. It can be only federation, however. It is impossible for them to have the constitutional safeguards, the unity and the leadership, which come with organic life and the traditions of a historic Church of which unity of organization has been an essential feature. The whole temper of our Church is not that of federation but of administrative unity. Each parish has its place, its rights, and its own spiritual life, with which no Bishop nor Diocese can interfere. It is, however, part of a whole; it gains strength and confidence from the consciousness of its larger diocesan life and of its partnership in the personality of a constitutional episcopate. The Church thus expresses a spiritual solidarity which appeals to a body of people like the citizens of our Commonwealth, many of whom

have had their fill of spiritual individuality, and who have still lingering in their memories the Puritan effort to identify the Church with the State.

I believe that this consciousness of organic life, though latent, is deep and strong in the people of Massachusetts. One of the most impressive religious ceremonies that was ever observed in the history of our Commonwealth was at the opening of this twentieth century. The State House represented the spiritual centre; masses of people gathered at its base; from its dome sounded the trumpet-call in welcome to the new century; and Edward Everett Hale, that personal embodiment of the spirit of New England, expressed in earnest prayer and thanksgiving the sentiments of the people. There was revealed the consciousness of the spiritual solidarity of the people, and it is that sentiment, strong and vital, I say, in the New Englander, which welcomes the idea of the cathedral, — the expression in architectural form of the spiritual unity, wherein may be offered the spiritual sacrifices of the whole people.

Practically (and as briefly as I can name them) a cathedral in Boston will fulfill these purposes. First and above all, it will, in this home of independency and Congregationalism, suggest the spiritual unity of our Christian faith and the fact

of the organic life of the Church. The parish churches with their family pews will continue their great and uplifting work, for I do not sympathize with the idea that it is an essential of the Christian faith that all churches should be entirely free and open, and that every person should have equal right to every seat. As a matter of spiritual expediency and of Christian principle, I believe that in some churches there should be emphasis on the family life. With this said, the fact is that in most of our communities a large body of the people are in movement; that, if we are to reach them, many of the churches must be free.

This also must be added, that no parish or mission church of any kind can have the same sort of freedom as can the cathedral. A body of earnest men may found and build a "People's Church," but so long as those men are unrepresentative of a great body, and there be one pastor, it cannot be the church of the people but must represent one very small phase of Christian thought and faith. The real church of the people is that wherein the whole body are represented. The cathedral, standing as it does as the church of no one man or group of men but of the whole Diocese, keeps its doors open week-days and Sundays for the spiritual good of the people. There is no pastor or group of people there to give a welcome, for

all the people equally have a right within the temple.

If it be true to its idea, a cathedral is the working centre of the Diocese. Its work may be greater or less than that of some parish church. It is, however, representative and peculiar. From it radiates a missionary life which is felt in those parts of the various cities and towns where the parish church cannot reach. It ministers so far as it can to the great and increasing body of people who are in perpetual movement. The parishes will do their part, but the cathedral also will have its duty in the boarding-houses, among the unchurched, in the great hospitals, and in meeting the thousands of young men and women who come as students to the schools and universities in Boston and its vicinity.

Of the young men who enter the ministry from this Diocese a large majority leave Massachusetts on their ordination in order that they may in New York and other cities gain such experience as will make them more efficient pastors of the churches. Through the missionary work of the cathedral a sympathetic relation between the high intellectual and spiritual forces of the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge and the practical forces of the cathedral organization would be developed.

It is along these practical lines that the cathedrals of history have been weak. There has often been uplifting worship, while at the very doors and under the eaves have been degradation and all forms of vice. The mission of the Cathedral is no less work than worship: through both of these God is glorified and character is upbuilt. As the sound of prayer and praise pours through its doors, there will also go into the streets and alleys of our great cities and smaller towns those who are so full of helpful power, so skilled in their work, and so inspired by the spirit of service that the great church will be to the people the embodiment of the heart of the Merciful Saviour.

In all that I have said of a cathedral thus far, I have said almost nothing which would suggest that the church itself should be of size, dignity, and architectural beauty comparable with even the smaller cathedrals of Europe. What I have tried to emphasize is the cathedral idea, and I have left the form of expression, whether the church be large or small, for consideration as the future may open. That the representative church of the Diocese and the cathedral of a great city should by its architecture and site be distinguished from parish churches would be naturally assumed. I am confident, however, that this whole community would welcome a great and noble church, dignified

and rich in its architecture, with uplifting worship, such a church as may gather into itself the traditions and the historic monuments of the people and may speak to the community through its stones and arches, as do the cathedrals of the old country to the sons of the Puritans.

It is a suggestive fact that Miss Walker and her sister Harriett, who was equally interested in the foundation of a cathedral, were the daughters not of a Churchman but of a New England Orthodox Congregational minister. It is well also for us to remember that perhaps the most typical son of New England in all our literature has expressed in poetic form the sentiments of a son of the Puritans as he stands in the shadow of a great cathedral. It is James Russell Lowell, son of the minister of the West Church, Boston, who speaks:

"With outward senses furlowed and head bowed
I followed some fine instinct in my feet,
Till, to unbend me from the loom of thought,
Looking up suddenly, I found my eyes
Confronted with the minster's vast repose.
. . . . . .
I stood before the triple northern port,
Where dedicated shapes of saints and kings,
Stern faces bleared with immemorial watch,
Looked down benignly grave and seemed to say,
Ye come and go incessant; we remain
Safe in the hallowed quiets of the past;
Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot,
Of faith so nobly realized as this."

Again, in a great and noble church the worshiper feels a sense of freedom: he, though an unchurched pagan, can quietly enter, and without committing himself to any form of religious faith, feel the sense of the eternities. The immigrant from Southern Europe, who has been estranged from his own Church, may find something that suggests his home. In truth, beneath the great arches of the cathedral may be kneeling side by side men and women of many faiths and creeds, and the temple may become through worship a church of reconciliation. Here in the great nave, which in the early days and in the older countries gathered the whole community for public counsel, may again gather the body of the people to listen to the prophets of the Living God calling men to civic and personal righteousness. May we not hope, too, that the inspiration created by the opportunities of a great cathedral will develope a fuller appreciation of the power of preaching and a deeper sense of the need of great preachers?

Two conditions are, it seems to me, essential to the creation and administration of a cathedral. First, its administration should be financially independent of the people that happen to be worshiping in its walls, though as a part of their worship as well as of their Christian duty they should give of their wealth or of their poverty to

the Church, not, however, to the support of the administration itself. If a cathedral is to do a large and independent work, it must have endowment.

Again, no cathedral is worth having that has not been built by the gifts and sacrifice of the whole people. For the bequest of one Christian woman we are grateful. We hope for great gifts and bequests from others. Even this is not enough. Our Boston Public Library, which this week celebrates the close of its first half century, points out the true way. It has been created by gifts great and small from thousands; it belongs to the whole people; over its door is inscribed the legend, "Free to all." And there, children and parents, poor and rich, are equal. If we really value the cathedral thought, its representative character, its worship and its work, we as a Diocese — I may say we as citizens of the Commonwealth, as a people — must all have part in its upbuilding.

Brethren of the clergy and laity, citizens of a great city, shall we deck our houses with all manner of beauty, erect our palaces of commerce and industry, and make large and noble our libraries and public buildings, and be content with these? Or shall we not, while still building and sustaining

our parish churches, keep before the Diocese as an object of high endeavor the erection of a cathedral of such size and architecture as will harmonize with the conditions of the Church in Massachusetts, — to be a centre of spiritual life and worship, the home of the churchless and of the saint, a temple which the whole body of the common people who hear the Master gladly may enter and call their home?